

SECRET

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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE VIA CAS CHANNELS EYES ONLY
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
TO : AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER
CITE: WHS0016

APRIL 6, 1970

THE PRESIDENT HAS VERY MUCH IN MIND THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION IN VIETNAM WILL GREATLY INCREASE THE RISKS OF CONTINUING WITH OUR CURRENT RATES OF WITHDRAWAL FOR THE NEXT TRANCHE. HOWEVER, ANY ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH IS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THE PATTERN SET HERETOFORE COULD BE THE SOURCE OF MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH DOMESTIC CRITICS. HE IS THEREFORE CONSIDERING ANNOUNCING A DECISION TO WITHDRAW AT LEAST 150,000 TROOPS OVER THE NEXT YEAR WITH JUST A TOKEN WITHDRAWAL, IF ANY, OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VIEWS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FORMULATION.

THIS FORMULATION WOULD COMMIT THE PRESIDENT TO A FIXED MINIMUM REDUCTION OVER THE ENTIRE YEAR BUT WOULD ALSO PERMIT THE MILITARY SITUATION TO DICTATE THE RATE AT WHICH WITHDRAWALS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED AND PROVIDE GENERAL ABRAMS WITH CONSIDERABLY MORE FLEXIBILITY IN DRAWING DOWN HIS COMBAT STRENGTH.

ANTICIPATE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL MEET WITH KEY ADVISERS HERE AS EARLY AS MONDAY OF NEXT WEEK, APRIL 13.

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY